



Ed Holt's Lesson in Restraint

By Tim Dietz – SSA VP, Communications & Government Relations

Ed Holt is one cool shooter whose coolest moment may be the instant he decided not to shoot.

To be clear, the SSA does not editorialize about the security procedures member companies choose to implement, nor can we endorse social advocacy groups, such as the NRA or the Brady Center.

So now that the disclaimers are out of the way (*obey the law*), I think we should all be impressed by the restraint shown by Holt, a 15-year veteran manager at A-1 Self Storage in Louisville, Kentucky. In August, the 69 year-old found himself between an enraged, mentally unstable man and the man's girlfriend, a tenant at his facility.

According to colleague Kevin Cunningham, Holt noticed the two quarreling outside his business office in a truck. Their argument escalated until the man shot at the woman sitting in the vehicle, missing her head by inches.

Noticing Holt at the open office door, the woman ran past him and into a bathroom, where she barricaded herself. After Holt had bolted the metal door shut, the agitated man started shooting through its view light window, severely cutting his arm as he reached in to open the door.

Holt retrieved a handgun he'd purchased from an uncle for \$25 years earlier as the now bleeding man gained entry

and focused his attention on the bathroom. Holt aimed his gun and told him to leave. The man said, "I'm not going to shoot you or her, I'm going to shoot myself." But he really appeared to be planning to shoot into the door.

Holt remained calm and continued to talk to him. "Get out of here or I'll shoot you myself," said the 6'6" Holt, described as a gentle giant.

Said Cunningham, "Nine out of ten persons would have emptied their gun at the man; ten out of ten officers would have shot him right away. But not Ed." The self storage manager had talked with the disturbed man a few times, and despite his own peril, did not want to kill him.

After a few tense moments the gunman left the building, but paced around looking into windows until he heard sirens. He was arrested without further violence nearby. The suspect was described by authorities as mentally unstable with a long record of trouble with the law.

They said the situation could have occurred almost anywhere, and it was just a lucky break for this disturbed individual that he snapped in the presence of a manager who was the picture of self-control. And that manager, Ed Holt was lucky to have purchased a \$25 insurance policy. ❖